

Durham City Council – Ward 3 Vacancy Application Answers

Ethnicity: White

Gender: Male

Are you 21?: Yes

Name of current city boards you are serving on: N/A

Name: Chastan Swain

Spouse's Name: Gregory Russell

Home Address: 902 Shepherd St. Durham NC 27701

Home Phone: N/A

Email Address: Chastanswain@gmail.com

Occupation: Law and Policy Advisor

Employer: State of NC

Business Address: 116 W. Jones St. Raleigh, NC 27603

Business Phone: 919-819-5795

Do you live within the corporate city limits?: Yes

Are you registered to vote in Durham?: Yes

Education: B.F.A. Appalachian State University; Post Bac., Pennsylvania State University; J.D., University Of North Carolina School of Law

Qualifications and Relevant Experience:

I have had the pleasure of living in Durham for the past five years, after moving here during my time at UNC School of Law. As a lifelong North Carolinian I see so much of the State reflected in this city. From its history in agriculture and black entrepreneurship, to its current culture of small businesses and innovation tied to the Research Triangle Park, Durham encapsulates the diverse and driven spirit of the State. I grew up on a tobacco farm an hour and half west from here, and my childhood was spent surrounded by family who celebrated each other's successes and sought to support each other in hardship, and I see that reflected here in the broader community.

I pursued a career first in fine arts, and then in law. I have had the unique opportunity to combine the two backgrounds by working with communities across the state to assist them with community and economic development initiatives, placemaking projects, and education initiatives. I have worked in three state departments: Health and Human Services, Office of State Budget and Management, and Natural and Cultural Resources. My experience in each has been diverse and people driven, from implementing pandemic era regulations at state health facilities, to administering \$28 million in CAREs Act funds to provide at home internet to K-12 students across North Carolina through the NC Student Connect initiative, to managing a statewide pilot program that works with local governments to develop their creative economies through music.

I am also passionate about the environment and the critical need for environmental equity in urban areas, and its contribution to safe, affordable, and sustainable communities. I served on the Durham City-County Environmental Affairs Board from 2020- 2022, and have served as a board member of the Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association since 2019. Through this service I have sought to elevate the need for conservation across Durham, including the recent successful protection of the Durham Waterbird Colony on lower Ellerbe Creek, and advocated for support of the South Ellerbe Restoration Project and action to address environmental risks at affordable housing complexes in Durham.

While I believe Durham is one of the best cities in the nation, there are continued challenges with public transit and affordable housing availability and access, responsible growth and development as Durham continues to attract innovative industries and their workforce, and education equity and workforce development. I would hope to assist with all of these challenges as a member of the council, and continue to respond to the emerging needs of the community as they arise.

Other information:

UNC Chapel Hill

- UNC Order of the Golden Fleece, Argonaut
- UNC Graduate and Professional Student Federation, Chief of External Relations and Advocacy
- UNC Graduate and Professional Student Federation, Director of Academic Affairs
- UNC Environmental Law Project, Member
- UNC Journal of Law and Technology, Staff
- UNC Law, Dean's Fellow
- UNC Legal Lambda Society, Outreach Coordinator
- UNC Pro Bono, Participant

Durham Environmental Affairs Board

August 2020 – Present

Board Member

- Reviewed and provided suggested updates to the Board's interlocal agreement
- Drafted updates to internal policies and procedures, specifically to enhance equitable access to Board meetings

Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association

November 2019 – Present

Board Member

- Created a political advocacy policy to ensure compliance with IRS lobbying restrictions for 501(c)(3)s
- Developed a local government engagement plan to advance organizational goals and streamline documentation for increased efficiency in record keeping

Date: 12/21/2023